(iii) all domestic supplies made to soft bonded IT units to be treated as 'deemed exports';

(iv) all benefits available to Export Oriented Units to be extended to soft bonded IT units;

(v) all banking in soft bonded IT units to be allowed in hard currencies;

(vi) fiscal incentives for exports made by soft bonded IT units; and

(vii) duty free import of capital goods, raw materials and piece parts by any unit manufacturing IT products or electronic components.

(c) Bringing down the import duty is likely to increase the velocity of business. However, it is also likely to have substantial revenue implications and apprehension has also been expressed that reduction of import duty to zero level may also have an adverse impact on domestic industry manufacturing these goods.

Import of Coins

2261. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govt, have recently decided to import coins; if so, the details thereof, indicating the countries from where such import is being done and the extent of imports;

(b) what circumstances have forced Government to import coins; and

(c) whether it is a fact that even Indian rupees are printed outside India; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) The Government have decided to import 1000 million pieces of coins (Re. 1—300 MPCs, Rs. 2—300 MPCs and Rs. 5—400 MPCs) during 1999-2000. The coins will be imported on the basis of a global tender. The name's of the country/countries will be known only after the tender is finalised.

(b) The proposed import is to deal with shortage of coins in the country.

(c) Keeping in view the indigenous capacity of printing of currency notes and the requirement of Reserve Bank of India, the Government authorised import of 3600 million pieces of currency notes (Rs. 100—2000 MPCs and Rs. 500—1600 MPCs) as a one-time measure. The im port was done by the Reserve Bank of India during 1997-98 and 1998-99 on the basis of a global tender.

Soiled notes in the North-Eastern Region

2262. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Reserve Bank, Guwahati has allowed continuance of one, two and five rupee old soiled notes in a very unhygenic and uncivilized manner in the North-Eastern Region which are nowhere accepted in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons for still allowing continuance of such soiled notes knowing fully well about its health hazards;

(c) total quantity of coins that replaced old notes in the NER year-wise since introduction; and

(d) total number of such coins intro duced in the country till date and State wise percentage of distribution?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) As a long term policy, Government has coinised notes of Re. 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 and hence printing of notes of these

denominations was stopped from September' 94; January'95 and November'95, respectively, while the notes remain legal tender, the intention of Government is to remove these notes from circulation. Facilities are already available at all public sector banks for exchange of soiled notes for coins; the RBI has recently introduced a special drive for exchange of soiled notes of Re. 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 at all its Issue Offices. This special drive has been given wide publicity by RBI in all